



DEC 5 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of State

Here is the FBIS transcript of Khrushchev's statement to Bob Considine about religion which I mentioned the other day and in which you expressed an interest.

Signed

Allen W. Dulles

Enclosure

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REQUESTED EXCERPT FROM TEXT OF KHRUSHCHEV INTERVIEW WITH U.S. PRESS CORRESPONDENTS, TRANSMITTED BY TASS IN ENGLISH 0001 11/29

CONSIDINE: MR. KHRUSHCHEV, YOU REFERRED TO GOD, TO SOUL, TO THE ABSOLUTE SPIRITUAL FREEDOM OF MAN UNDER COMMUNISM, BUT THEN WHY DOES A MAN WHO BELIEVES IN GOD, IN MAN'S INNER SPIRITUAL CONTENT, HAVE NO PLACE IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY?

KHRUSHCHEV: IF, IN OUR SPEECH, WE USE SUCH EXPRESSIONS AS FOR INSTANCE, "GOD'S TRUTH, THIS HAPPENS ONLY BY VIRTUE OF HABIT. TO US, SUCH AN EXPRESSION IS EQUIVALENT TO THE PHRASE "UPON MY WORD OF HONOR." WE CONSIDER THAT BELIEF IN GOD CONTRADICTS OUR COMMUNIST OUTLOOK. WE, HOWEVER, BY NO MEANS PERSECUTE PEOPLE PROFESSING A RELIGION, FOR THIS IS A MATTER OF EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE.

IN THE SOVIET UNION, THE CHURCH HAS BEEN SEPARATED FROM THE STATE. BUT YOU PROBABLY KNOW THAT THERE ARE MANY CHURCHES IN OUR COUNTRY, AND EVERY ONE OF THEM HAS FULL FREEDOM OF ACTION IF IT DOES NOT INTERFERE IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE STATE. IF CLERGYMEN WERE TO START COMBINING THEIR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES WITH POLITICAL PROPAGANDA AGAINST THE SOVIET SYSTEM, THIS WOULD BE A VIOLATION OF OUR CONSTITUTION, AND THE SOVIET PEOPLE WOULD NOT TOLERATE THIS INTERFERENCE OF THE CHURCH IN THE AFFAIRS OF THEIR STATE.

IN A WORD, WE WILL NOT GO TO FOR THE TOMB OF THE SAVIOUR. ONE SHOULD NOT FIGHT FOR A TOMB TO STREW THE WORLD WITH OTHER TOMBS. ONCE, BLODDY WARS WERE FOUGHT FOR THE TOMB OF THE SAVIOUR. THOUSANDS UPON THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE PERISHED IN CRUSADES. BUT THESE TIMES HAVE LONG SINCE BECOME HISTORY.

HEARST: I WOULD LIKE TO SAY, NOT AS AN OBJECTION BUT JUST AS A REMARK, THAT STILL THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A CIVILIZATION IN HISTORY OR A GREAT COUNTRY WHICH DID NOT BELIEVE IN SOME GOD OR OTHER.

KHRUSHCHEV: I MUST SAY, AS A MATTER OF ELUCIDATION, THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A COUNTRY WHERE ALL PEOPLE PROFESSED ONE FAITH, WHERE ALL OF THEM BELIEVED IN GOD. WE, TOO, STILL HAVE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN GOD. SO LET THEM BELIEVE. TO BELIEVE OR NOT TO BELIEVE IN GOD IS A PERSONAL AFFAIR OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL, A MATTER OF THE CONSCIENCE. ALL THIS, HOWEVER, DOES NOT PREVENT THE SOVIET PEOPLE FROM LIVING IN PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP. AND IT OFTEN HAPPENS THAT THERE ARE BELIEVERS AND ATHEISTS IN ONE FAMILY.

BUT THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN GOD ARE BECOMING FEWER AND FEWER. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE GROWING UP, AND THEY, IN THEIR OVERWHELMING MAJORITY, DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD. PUBLIC EDUCATION, THE DISSEMINATION OF SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, AND THE STUDY OF THE LAWS OF NATURE, LEAVE NO PLACE FOR BELIEF IN GOD.

HEARST: I ONLY WANT TO SAY THAT THEREIN, POSSIBLY, LIES ONE OF THE REASONS WHY WE CANNOT ALWAYS REACH AGREEMENT WITH EACH OTHER.

THE THING IS, PERHAPS, THAT WHEN WE GIVE OUR WORD CALLING UPON GOD WE ASSUME A SPIRITUAL PLEDGE, WHILE IN THE CASE OF RUSSIA, AGREEMENTS REMAIN ON PAPER ONLY. I DO NOT KNOW, BUT MAYBE SOME DAY WE WILL MANAGE TO OVERCOME ALL THESE DIFFERENCES.

KHRUSHCHEV: IN REPLY TO THIS, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THE FOLLOWING: WE COMMUNISTS, THE SOVIET POLITICIANS, ARE ATHEISTS. BUT WE PLACE HIGH VALUE ON OUR PLEDGES, ON OUR WORD, AND WE NEVER BREAK OUR PLEDGES. WE VALUE THE LIFE OF MAN AND DEVOTE ALL OUR EFFORTS TO INSURING THAT THE PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRY HAVE A GOOD, HAPPY LIFE, THAT ALL SOVIET PEOPLE ARE EQUAL IN THEIR RIGHTS AND DUTIES, THAT THEY HAVE ALL THE POSSIBILITIES FOR IMPROVING THEMSELVES AND THEIR LABOR. WE COMMUNISTS ARE FIGHTING ACTIVELY TO PREVENT WAR, ARE DOING EVERYTHING THAT THERE BE NO NEW WAR.

Now, take Mr. Dulles for instance. He is a religious man and very often he appeals to God, calling upon Him as witness. So, appealing to God, Mr. Dulles sends his emissary, Mr. Boardman, to Turkey and other countries to engineer war, to orchestrate the killing of people. How can this be compatible with the conception of belief in God? No religion will bless such actions.

This is where the discrepancy lies. Such people seek to present the matter as if in their activities they really proceed from "giving commands," while, in fact, they engage in activities contradicting the very principles of humaneness, and consequently the whole of human society.

How can one hold services and sprinkle holy water on the weapons designed for the destruction of man, give blessing to people who go to kill other people only because these people speak a different language or profess a different faith? But this is done by some priests.

Can you call it the supreme spiritual manifestation of humaneness and integrity? No, it is a mask. God is often used as a camouflage in order to deceive people by playing on the feelings of believers. But this is nothing but phariseism.

There are many people who use the name of God to cover their criminal, antisocial deeds. And we shall always fight against such people, unmask their activities, show the people true ways of moral and spiritual emancipation. A victory in this struggle will be on the side of our socialist order. And you will never set the American people against us on the ground that we are atheists. As soon as they realize the loftiness of our aims, of our actions, they will turn with contempt from those who want to set them against us and to push them to a new war which will cost mankind much blood and tremendous losses.

I recall a story I once read, about robbers who killed and robbed a man. In the plunder they found a chunk of fresh ham. After a time the robbers decided to take a rest and eat the ham. They had already started distributing it among themselves when one of them asked: What day of the week is it today? He was told it was Wednesday or Friday--I can't remember the exact day named in the story. Then he decided that they could not eat the ham, for the Orthodox Church prohibited meat on Wednesday and Fridays.

You see how it is -- the robbers killed a man, took his life and everything he had, but did not eat the ham taken from the plunder for fear of committing a sin, because it is purportedly forbidden by God to eat animal food on that day.

Is it not that the deeds of certain Western statesmen remind one of this sacrilegious conduct of the people described in this story? For they, shielding themselves by the name of God, quite often do things which bring death to thousands and millions of people.

In their day, in pursuit of gain, the colonialists never failed to send to the countries they enslaved, together with troops, their priests, and so to speak conquered the peoples with the sword and the cross. The colonialists brought to enslaved countries the cross and gospel, they forced their religion upon the people. They left the gospel to the people and took the riches for themselves.

The whole world knows about this sacrilege, about this deception. So it is better than you do not speak about how religion was implanted in the people, do not appeal to God for help in the struggle against the exploited and oppressed people. All these are methods already experienced by, and known to, the working people.

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